

BANNER ENTERPRISE.

ESTABLISHED

INDEPENDENT IN THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION.

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CROOK'S FERRY.

This particular old ferry was run across the Sabine river about forty miles from its mouth, and the ferryman's house stood on the Texas side. This was during the "late unpleasantness" between the States. It may be there to this day, but of that the writer cannot speak with any degree of certainty.

Sam Crook was the name of the ferryman, and Sam Crook had a very pretty daughter, aged 17, whose name was Irene, and whose everyday occupation was to cook and keep house for her father and the hired man, who alternately ran the ferry and worked a few acres of land in the rear of the ferry-house. It also happened at times that when her father and Ned Baggett were both away Irene had to run passengers across, to and fro, as well as to attend to her household duties.

Now, as we have already said that Irene was a pretty girl, it naturally follows that she had lovers; in fact, she had a number of them, and among the most persistent was the hired man, Ned Baggett, who insisted on paying his attentions to her, although the young lady had told him a hundred times that she detested him and always would.

Ned Baggett, however, remained firm, and told her doggedly that she would some day be glad to take him, for he was determined that no one else should ever get her.

"How will you help yourself?" Irene asked him at one time.

"How'll I help myself? I'll just help myself by puttin' daylight through any fellow as undertakes to come in my way—that's what I'll do," answered Ned, with a lowering look.

"Pool!" said Irene. "You had better not mention that in Phil Barker's hearing, for if you do you will never even live to regret it."

"Ah!" ejaculated Ned. "So you're sweet on him, are ye?"

"We are engaged," said Irene, proudly.

"An' that's all you'll ever be," said Ned, "for Phil Barker's dead as a hammer already. Ha, ha!"

"What do you mean?" asked Irene, turning deathly pale. "How did he die? Who killed him?"

"The Yankees killed him yesterday," answered Ned.

"I believe—I hope—you are lying to me, Ned," gasped Irene.

But over Ned's features there spread a wicked grin of exultation that said very plainly that he was in earnest in all that he told her. He replied:

"Not much I ain't a-lying to ye. Phil Barker is dead an' no mistake."

"How did he die? Where?"

"In a Union camp. He and two others were tried and convicted of being spies, and they were ordered to be shot yesterday which no doubt they were."

"How did you find this out?" asked Irene, holding for support to the post that held up the great ferry hawser.

"My brother crossed the river this morning, an' he told me of it. He ran away from the same camp."

"My God!" gasped Irene. "Oh, Phil! If you are in truth dead, then may I die, too!"

"I hope you won't, my purty one," said Ned, "for I want ye for myself, as I told you before, an' I'd a heap rather have ye alive than dead. Good-bye for awhile," and with that he stalked away to the westward in the direction of the timber.

It was in the spring, and heavy rains had fallen, which had on this particular day and during the previous night caused the river to rise very rapidly, so that it was utterly impossible to cross at any point save by ferry.

Three or four horsemen and a couple of freight wagons crossed the river in the afternoon; and as Sam Crook and Ned Baggett were both absent, it became necessary for Irene to run the ferry over several times.

When night approached the river still continued rising, and it bade fair to keep "on the rise" for several days. It had now become so high, and the current was so swift that to venture out with the ferry-boat would have been dangerous indeed. As Mr. Crook and Ned did not return, Irene was very glad that no one came to cross, for she would not have dared to set the old scow into the foaming current. But she was destined to have to do with some very critical events before the morning sun should rise.

She had just milked her one cow, and was about to enter the ferry-house for the even-

ing, when a cry on the other side of the river attracted her attention. She peered across the boiling maelstrom of water and perceived three figures, one of whom appeared to be lying on the ground and the other two were gesticulating wildly and waving handkerchiefs in the air, beckoning for the ferry-boat to be brought over.

Irene walked closer to the river bank and endeavored by signs to tell them that the river was impassable, but still the two men continued their gestures of pleading to be brought over. Another storm was brewing in the northwest, and Irene knew that on the east side of the river there was no house nor shelter of any kind for many miles, and her heart went in sympathy for the travelers on the opposite shore. She determined to brave the current and bring the ferry-boat over it could possibly be done.

In a few moments she was on board the old scow, and giving the guide wheel a few turns, she was soon driven rapidly into the center of the foaming river. The pulleys creaked, the cordage was terribly strained, and the great guide rope was like the string on a bent bow. The force of the current was tremendous, but the brave Irene reached the shore in safety.

And imagine her astonishment when she discovered that the three travelers were her betrothed, whom she had been told was dead, and two of her friends. They were in fact, the very persons who had been taken and condemned as spies, as stated by Ned Baggett; but by some means or other they had escaped their doom. All three appeared to be exhausted and suffering, either from illness or fatigue, and Phil Barker was unable to stand or walk, for he was suffering from a very bad wound in his side.

"God bless you, my brave darling!" said Phil, as Irene touched the shore.

"Oh! thank Heaven that you are not dead!" cried Irene, leaping to his side and taking his brown outstretched hand in her own soft, but hardly less sun-burned one.

"Dead! No, but it has been a tight slip—and we are not yet safe, for they are close behind us. But if we can once get across the river we will be safe for a time, at least, for they cannot cross the stream without the ferry, and that they must have until we are at a safe distance, Irene."

"I would sink it before it should be the means of your capture. Let us go at once."

The two friends and companions of Lieutenant Barker lifted him gently from the ground and placed him on the boat. There was nothing else to go, for they had neither horses nor baggage of any kind.

Irene quickly spun the wheel around the other way, and the old ferry boat started on its homeward journey once more.

It was very dark when they reached the west shore, and none of them saw the shadowy form that lay watching them behind a pile of stranded drift-wood.

They proceeded at once up to the ferry house and entered. Irene lighted candles, made pallets for the weary soldiers to rest on, and then she went about preparing refreshments.

"Thank God! I have him safe," she murmured, as she went gaily about her work.

But her lover and his two faithful friends were not quite out of danger. His wound and their exhausted condition, caused by a long journey through a wild country, quite incapacitated them from proceeding onward for at least a day or two. If the river remained up, they were safe, providing their pursuers did not get hold of the ferry; but if the river should suddenly fall to a fordable condition at any place, their enemies might yet get them in hand. But at present they were too much exhausted to think of anything, save that they were safely lodged in Mr. Crook's cottage, and that the mad river rolled defiantly between themselves and their enemies.

Irene prepared a savory meal, with a great pot of steaming coffee, and the three wanderers ate voraciously. Then they wrapt their blankets around them and were soon buried in sleep.

Neither Mr. Crook nor Ned Baggett returned to the cottage, but this did not cause Irene any uneasiness, for her father frequently remained in the woods (where he was at the present time, engaged in securing fuel) for several days at a time. As for Ned, he went and came just as it happened.

Irene went to her own little room, which was at the end of the cottage facing the river, and prepared to retire. Just outside her window were several great spiles, driven into the ground, to which was fastened the heavy hawser or guide-rope of the ferry, and these

were now creaking and squeaking as they ground together by the strain of the rope. Irene wondered why they did so. She thought it was probably done by the wind swaying the long guide-rope. She looked out of the window in the direction of the river, but it was so dark that she could see nothing.

She went to bed and tossed to and fro on her pillow, but could not sleep. The moon arose, and, as the clouds parted in the east, it shed a bright silvery light over the river shores and along the foaming waves of the Sabine.

Irene who had fallen into a kind of doze, suddenly arose with a start. Leaping from the bed, she paused for a moment to listen. The spiles outside were creaking more than ever, and it was this noise that had wakened her.

She instantly donned a cloak, slipped her feet into a dainty pair of shoes and left the room.

She walked straight to the river bank, and when she gazed at the now completely maddened river, her heart almost ceased beating for there in the middle of the stream was the ferry rapidly advancing with Ned Baggett at the wheel; a dozen blue coated soldiers and officers were the passengers. She could see the bayonets glistening in the moonlight; and she knew that these men were in search of her lover and his friends, and that in twenty minutes they would be made prisoners and led away to almost instant death.

"Heavens!" she gasped; "What shall I do? I must save him; but how?"

Ah! How?

A glance of fire flashed from her eyes as she looked in the direction of approaching ferry. Her lips closed firmly together. She had made up her mind.

Quick as thought she flew to woodshed, secured a bright and sharp ax, and returned to the spiles, where the great hawser was straining and creaking.

Up in the air went the bright axe blade! Down! One—two—three—crash! And the great guide-rope snapped asunder.

There came ringing cries of alarm from the river. The ferry, with the men in blue and the perfidious Ned Baggett, rushed madly on with the current that flowed like the speed of the wind. In ten minutes the old scow had disappeared from view around a bend of the river.

Phil Barker and his two companions slept peacefully on through the night, quite oblivious of the danger from which they had so narrowly escaped by the quick wits of a determined young woman.

On the following morning Irene related all the circumstances attending the events of the night.

Barker and his friends after resting for a day, were able to resume their journey and made good their escape.

The old ferry boat went ashore near the mouth of the river, and all on board landed in safety, with the exception of Ned Baggett, who had in his terror leaped into the stream, and in his attempt to swim ashore had been drowned.

The writer of this story learned these facts from the lips of the heroine herself, and her name is Mrs. Barker.—A. C. Monson, in Texas Siftings.

SPIRIT OF THE COLORED PRESS.

WILL DIE BY IT.

Longstreet intends to die by his Republican "office-holding pap."—Savannah (Ga.) Echo.

INDEPENDENTISM ENDORSED.

We have received letters from W. M. Coleman, a wealthy colored man of Concord, N. C., approving our course—Independent. Also from Professor I. S. A. Murphy, of Wilberforce University, and several others.—Kinston (N. C.) Times.

BEGGING RECOGNITION.

Two of the four Louisiana delegates to the National Convention are colored men, Hons. P. B. S. Pinchback and A. J. Dumont. Ohio must have at least one colored delegate.—Cleveland Gazette.

Brother Smith, we have sixteen delegates and eight are colored. You see we treat our white Republicans generously. We are largely in the majority, and yet we divide the cake with them. Let the Ohio white Republicans treat their colored brethren with justice only.—Louisiana Standard.

If they treat us with "justice only," we will have a colored man delegate to the National Convention. The Democrats have given us a Civil Rights law, and as little as our Republican friends can do is to give us a delegate.—Cleveland (Ohio) Gazette.

ATTENDS TO HIS BUSINESS.

Our townsman, Geo. H. White, Esq., is one among the few colored lawyers of our State who is making a handsome living by his profession. He is a young man of energy and a good lawyer, and those who have legal business to be transacted would do well to consult him.—Republican Banner, (New Berne.)

MENTAL IMPROVEMENT.

One of our exchanges has a column devoted to miscellaneous contributions. It is principally patronized by young ladies, who contribute short essays on a variety of topics. The most of them are very fairly written. At any rate, they show a taste for literature and evidence refinement. Cannot our lady readers send us some sketches, essays, etc.?—New (S. C.) Era.

GLAD TO HEAR IT.

Just suppose that such a dreadful scene as occurred in Cincinnati, Ohio, had happened in any Southern city. How quickly would it have been applied for party and campaign purposes, and the South charged with disorder and disregard of civilization. This time it is in a Northern city, and it is simply referred to as an unusual outbreak, but nothing fundamentally damaging to the people. The riot shows that people are the same all over the world, and that under given circumstances of excitement, they will go to extremes. The South, and especially South Carolina, is very quiet, and the arguery is bright for its continuance.—Charleston (S. C.) New Era.

HUMANITY SHUDDERS.

A committee of the Mississippi Legislature, in reporting upon the convict lease system, says that crimes have been committed under the guise of the law more cruel and offensive than in the Fleet and Marshalsea under the English system. The prison system has been run without expense to the State, but this has been done at the expense of the lives of helpless, manacled creatures, and the profit can only be regarded as blood money. The committee recommends the greatest activity on the part of the superintendent in order to protect convicts from cruel treatment. In regard to the subletting system, the report says it is so horrible that the committee deem it improper to make public its horrors.—Georgia Baptist.

THE UNION.

THE NEGRO MAKES SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN POLITICS.

COLUMBUS, OHIO, March 23.—At a convention held here last Saturday by the Republicans, Mr. J. B. Johnston, a young colored man was nominated by acclamation for constable. Mr. W. H. Roney was elected a member of the executive committee.

DEMOCRATS IN LINE.

The Democrats have nominated Capt. Ned Brown for the same position. This is the first time in the history of the city that a colored man has been put on the ticket of either party. The colored people are divided, as both are popular and good men. This is what we call substantial progress for the Negro in the politics of the Buckeye State.

The white people vote for their choice regardless of party, and the colored man who does not exercise the same right is not worthy of citizenship. REX.

BOSTON, MASS.—Col. George W. Williams, the Negro American historian, has been interviewed in relation to the aspirants for the Presidency, and thinks that Edmunds is as cold as ice, Sherman as cold as Edmunds. He further says that if Blaine should get the nomination, he (G. W. W.) would leave the party and endeavor to defeat him. Mr. Williams evidently favors the nomination of President Arthur.

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 31.—On last Tuesday evening, in response to a call of Stewart, Smith, Thompson and others, quite a number of correspondents met in the elegant and spacious parlors of Carson's Hotel, (kindly offered for the occasion by the genial proprietor) and organized themselves into a society known as the National Correspondents' Association, with the following officers: President, C. C. Stewart; Vice-Presidents, H. S. Smith, J. W. Lyons, W. C. Chase, Col. Wm. Murrell, H. E. Baker; Recording Secretary, E. L. Thornton; Assistant Secretary, J. S. Davis; Corresponding Secretary, D. S. Brandon; Financial Secretary, your correspondent; Treasurer, T. M. Dent; General News Manager, Arthur St. A. Smith.

THE STATE.

Straws From the Boughs of our State Exchanges, Picked up on the Drift.

Says the Winston Leader:

"A white female child was born in Washington township, this county," having four eyes, two noses and two mouths.

The Fayetteville Sun says:

Yesterday it was our pleasure to visit the State Colored Normal School, located here for the training of teachers for the colored schools of the State. We are glad to find the school very largely attended and under most excellent discipline.

Prof. E. E. Smith, the principal, conducted us through the different departments, which presented the appearance of neatness and order. The attendance at this season is unusually large, and promises fair to excel that of any previous session.

It numbers at present one hundred and fifteen students, who represent fourteen different counties.

The principal and his assistants are sparing neither pains nor earnestness in imparting to the students useful and practical knowledge. Their one chief aim seems to be thoroughness. The advanced classes solve and demonstrate with apparent ease, the most intricate problems in higher Arithmetic and Algebra.

Besides the English branches and mathematics; music, drawing and writing are taught through the entire course. We were well pleased with what we saw and heard at the school.

A few days since a Sun reporter visited the Howard Graded School (colored) of this city. He found a school-room thirty-five by twenty feet in dimensions, two stories high, well ventilated, and well lighted. At either end of the building are recreation rooms. These are also comfortable and amply supplied with light. Around the room occupying all the space not taken up by windows, as high as a man can reach are blackboards. This school is now under the management of Principal A. W. Whitfield, who has been engaged in teaching for many years, and is competent not only as a teacher but also as a disciplinarian. It was organized in 1868 and has been gaining in patronage up to now. The day our reporter called there were 355 students enrolled, and five applicants waiting to be enrolled. There are four grades, and four teachers. The school has increased in membership twenty-five per cent. more the past year than ever before for the same length of time. Our reporter heard a class of five girls and boys read who did themselves great credit. The school is supplied with the most improved text books. It is kept up by county funds and like many other home institutions, is a credit to our people.

The Franklinton Weekly says:

Franklin county had 2,657 polls listed for taxation on as per the last report of the Auditor.

In the election nearly 4,000 votes were cast. Of course some who were entitled to vote did not. Now those over fifty years of age are free from poll tax, but does it not seem that a large proportion of our citizens are old men?

Increase of the Colored Population.

The total population of the United States in 1880 was 50,152,866, of which 43,406,876 are white, and 6,745,990 are colored. The number of colored persons to each 100,000 whites is 15,153 against 14,528 in 1870. The greatest proportion of colored to white is in South Carolina, where three-fifths of the whole are colored. In Louisiana Mississippi from one-half to three-fifths are colored. In Alabama, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia the colored population forms one-third to one-half of the total.

One of the striking features of the increase of Southern population as exhibited by the last census is the important measure in which the colored race has contributed to it. In 1870 the white population in nine Southern States—Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas being alone omitted—was 4,759,465; in 1880 it raised to 6,180,118—an increase of 1,420,653. In the same years, respectively, the colored population was 2,141,225 and 4,186,602—an increase of 1,045,377. The ratio of gain in the white was 30 per cent., and in the colored 33.3 per cent. Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas have received heavy white immigration, both from abroad and from other parts of the country, which has more than overbalanced whatever gain in colored population may have been made. They have been the scene of rapid development, and thus the relative decrease of blacks in those States is to be accounted for, not by any exodus or a dying out, but by an infusion of whites.